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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 24, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 24, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

HURRIYET: The health of five-year-old Muhammet Ozcan, who has been treated at Van Centennial University's Research Hospital, has been improving. Muhammet Ozcan is the brother of a 12-year-old Fatma Ozcan, who died of bird flu in mid-January in the Van University Hospital.

SABAH / OZGUR GUNDEM: Seven young persons and children, who have been suspected of displaying bird-flu symptoms, have been transferred from Bitlis's Tatvan district to the Van Centennial University's Research Hospital. One person in Batman having the symptoms of the bird flu has been hospitalized in Diyarbakir.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily reported allegations that bird-flu has been detected in the sections of Iran mostly populated by the Kurds; however, Iran has allegedly been veiling such news about the outbreak of bird-flu cases in its territory. Reportedly, many wild birds and poultry in the Mahabad province of Iran and in its villages died, and officials are trying to hush up the details about the cases.

ZAMAN / BOLGE: Officials from the Provincial Agricultural Directorate suspecting a bird flu case took samples from twenty dead birds found on the shore of the Seyhan dam lake in Adana. The cause of the death of the birds reportedly could be fishing nets.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A reported makeshift quarantine has been imposed and intensive measures have been taken upon arrival of a 12-person U.S. delegation to Erzurum's Maksut Efendi quarter. However, when the delegation left the spot, the quarantine was been ended instantly, according to the paper.

ZAMAN: Upon noticing a bomb placed in one of crowded shopping malls of Mersin, police safely detonated the bomb through the help of a fuse.

BOLGE / ZAMAN / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): MHP (National Movement Party) Deputy General Secretary and MHP Adana Provincial Administration paid a visit and extended support to the workers who refused to leave TEKEL cigarette factory in Adana in order to protest the decision of the government to close down the factory.

CUMHURİYET / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / SABAH / EVRENSSEL: Harsh winter conditions in the eastern and Southeastern Turkey have had adverse impacts on people's lives. Currently, roads to 5,000 villages have been closed because of snowfall. Meanwhile, a faculty member in Erciyes University in Kayseri said that bird-flu virus would persist in cold weather conditions under snow. The professor noted that when the climate would get milder in the spring, the bird-flu disease could continue to jeopardize human health.

OZGUR GUNDEM: More than a hundred people launched a hunger strike in Siirt to protest the 20-day confinement of Abdullah Ocalan in his prison cell. Meanwhile, an unspecified number of people in Mus, who started an 8-day rolling hunger strike on the same grounds, have decided to prolong the strike indefinitely.

OZGUR GUNDEM: According to Murat Karayilan, one of the top PKK officials, Turkey and the PKK have been striving to exhaust the PKK's financial resources. Karayilan reportedly urged the people to be sensitive to this issue and contribute more to the PKK, which has been standing on its own feet for years without resorting to outside means.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Two of the three people detained three days ago in Diyarbakir on grounds that they aided and abetted a terrorist organization, have been arraigned and convicted of the aforementioned crime.

EVRENSSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Silopi Democratic People's Initiative made a call to the people to participate in the press announcement they will be holding to commemorate the fifth year of alleged disappearance of two people, Serdar Tanis, HADEP's former Silopi provincial chairperson, and Ebubekir Deniz, HADEP's provincial leader, at Silopi Jandarma Command in 2001.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Action has been brought against fifteen people who used a Turkish courtesy title before Abdullah Ocalan's name during a press announcement in Mardin's Mazidag district on July 2005 to protest the 'inhuman' conditions of Abdullah Ocalan in his prison in Imrali Island.

BOLGE: DACE's (Eastern Mediterranean Environmentalist Associations) secretary made a press announcement and said that despite operations undertaken by the Spanish government to remove the toxic waste in the shipwreck of M/V Ulla, a vessel which sank in September 2004 in the Iskenderun Bay due to negligence that arose because of the dispute between the company that owned the waste and the agency of the vessel, most of the 2,200 tons of waste have not been safely removed and removal operations have indeed remained incomplete. DACE secretary further stated that they would file a lawsuit with the European Court of Human Rights concerning the case.

SABAH (GUNEY): A delegation from the German Development Bank came to Gaziantep and paid a visit to the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce. The delegation and chamber members discussed the problems of SMEs and tried to work out solutions to address those problems.

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